

## Senate Bill No. 1025

### CHAPTER 642

An act to amend Section 12955.1 of, and to add Section 12955.1.1 to, the Government Code, relating to fair housing.

[Approved by Governor September 30, 2003. Filed  
with Secretary of State October 1, 2003.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1025, Escutia. Fair housing: multilevel townhouses.

The existing California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against any person in any housing accommodation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, or disability. It permits the Department of Fair Employment and Housing to engage in affirmative actions to prevent and provide for effective remedies against housing discrimination.

Under existing law, discrimination includes, but is not limited to, a failure to design and construct a covered multifamily dwelling in a specified manner. Existing law provides that regulations adopting building standards necessary to implement, interpret, or make specific these provisions are required to be developed by the Office of the State Architect for public housing and by the Department of Housing and Community Development for all other residential occupancies, as specified.

This bill would revise the definition of discrimination to include prescribed requirements relating to multistory dwelling units in buildings without an elevator that consist of at least four condominium dwelling units or at least three rental apartment dwelling units.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 12955.1 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12955.1. (a) For purposes of Section 12955, "discrimination" includes, but is not limited to, a failure to design and construct a covered multifamily dwelling in a manner that allows access to, and use by, disabled persons by providing, at a minimum, the following features:

(1) All covered multifamily dwellings shall have at least one building entrance on an accessible route, unless it is impracticable to do so because of the terrain or unusual characteristics of the site. The burden



of establishing impracticability because of terrain or unusual site characteristics is on the person or persons who designed or constructed the housing facility.

(2) All covered multifamily dwellings with a building entrance on an accessible route shall be designed and constructed in a manner that complies with all of the following:

(A) The public and common areas are readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

(B) All the doors designed to allow passage into and within all premises are sufficiently wide to allow passage by persons in wheelchairs.

(C) All premises within covered multifamily dwelling units contain the following features of adaptable design:

(i) An accessible route into and through the covered dwelling unit.

(ii) Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats, and other environmental controls in accessible locations.

(iii) Reinforcements in bathroom walls to allow later installation of grab bars around the toilet, tub, shower stall, and shower seat, where those facilities are provided.

(iv) Useable kitchens and bathrooms so that an individual in a wheelchair can maneuver about the space.

(b) (1) For purposes of Section 12955, “discrimination” includes, but is not limited to, a failure to design and construct 10 percent of the multistory dwelling units in buildings without an elevator that consist of at least four condominium dwelling units or at least three rental apartment dwelling units in a manner that incorporates an accessible route to the primary entry level entrance and that meets the requirements of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) with respect to the ground floor, at least one bathroom on the primary entry level and the public and common areas. Any fraction thereof shall be rounded up to the next whole number. For purposes of this subdivision, “elevator” does not include an elevator that serves only the first ground floor or any nonresidential area. In multistory dwelling units in these buildings without elevators, the “primary entry level entrance” means the principal entrance through which most people enter the dwelling unit, as designated by the California Building Standards Code or, if not designated by California Building Standards Code, by the building official. To determine the total number of multistory dwelling units subject to this subdivision, all multistory dwelling units in the buildings subject to this subdivision on a site shall be considered collectively. This subdivision shall not be construed to require an elevator within an individual multistory dwelling unit or within a building subject to this subdivision. This subdivision shall apply only to multistory dwelling



units in a building subject to this subdivision for which an application for a construction permit is submitted on or after July 1, 2005.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (c), the Division of the State Architect and the Department of Housing and Community Development may adopt regulations to clarify, interpret, or implement this subdivision, if either of them deem it necessary and appropriate.

(c) Notwithstanding Section 12935, regulations adopting building standards necessary to implement, interpret, or make specific the provisions of this section shall be developed by the Division of the State Architect for public housing and by the Department of Housing and Community Development for all other residential occupancies, and shall be adopted pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 18935) of Part 2.5 of the Health and Safety Code. Prior to the effective date of regulations adopted pursuant to this subdivision, existing federal accessibility standards that provide, to persons with disabilities, greater protections than existing state accessibility regulations shall apply. After regulations pursuant to this subdivision become effective, particular state regulations shall apply if they provide, to persons with disabilities, the same protections as, or greater protections than, the federal standards. If particular federal regulations provide greater protections than state regulations, then those federal standards shall apply. If the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development determines that any portion of the state regulations are not equivalent to the federal standards, the federal standards shall, as to those portions, apply to the design and construction of covered multifamily dwellings until the state regulations are brought into compliance with the federal standards. The appropriate state agency shall provide notice pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 5 of Division 3 of Title 2) of that determination.

(d) In investigating discrimination complaints, the department shall apply the building standards contained in the California Building Standards Code to determine whether a covered multifamily dwelling is designed and constructed for access to and use by disabled persons in accordance with this section.

(e) The building standard requirements for persons with disabilities imposed by this section shall meet or exceed the requirements under the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-430) and its implementing regulations (24 C.F.R. 100.1 et seq.) and the existing state law building standards contained in the California Building Standards Code.

SEC. 2. Section 12955.1.1 is added to the Government Code, to read:



12955.1.1. For purposes of Section 12955.1, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) “Covered multifamily dwellings” means both of the following:

(1) Buildings that consist of at least four condominium dwelling units or at least three rental apartment dwelling units if the buildings have at least one elevator. For purposes of this definition, dwelling units within a single structure separated by firewalls do not constitute separate buildings.

(2) The ground floor dwelling units in buildings that consist of at least four condominium dwelling units or at least three rental apartment dwelling units if the buildings do not have an elevator. For purposes of this definition, dwelling units within a single structure separated by firewalls do not constitute separate buildings.

(b) “Multistory dwelling unit” means a condominium dwelling unit or rental apartment with finished living space on one floor and the floor immediately above or below it or, if applicable, the floors immediately above and below it.

